

SNAPSHOT

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS (ELA) TEXTBOOKS IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND CHARTER SCHOOLS

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The Tennessee Literacy Success Act requires all school districts and public charter schools to adopt and use English Language Arts (ELA) textbooks and instructional materials from the 2019 state-approved adoption list by January 1, 2023. To use textbooks that are not on the state-approved adoption list, districts and charter schools must have an approved waiver. State law requires the Comptroller's Office of Research and Education Accountability (OREA) to review the ELA textbooks adopted and used by districts and charter schools to assess compliance with state law.

Conclusions

- **Most school districts and charter schools are using ELA textbooks from the state-approved adoption list or have an approved waiver.**
- **A full and complete list of all ELA textbooks being used at all grade levels in all districts and charter schools could not be assembled at this time.** The state does not maintain data on the textbooks being used by districts and charter schools in grades 6-12. In addition, not all districts and charter schools responded to OREA's request for information, and not all of those that did respond provided specifics about the textbook publisher and title for all grades served.
- **The state does not maintain a complete list of waivers allowing charter schools to use textbooks not on the adoption list.** At least 27 charter schools reviewed by OREA cited using a waiver for textbooks not on the adoption list. OREA was unable to confirm that these charter schools had approved waivers because the state does not maintain data on general charter school waivers or textbook waivers.

Policy Considerations

- The General Assembly may wish to consider requiring school districts and charter schools to report to the Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE) the textbooks used for grades 6-12, as is already required for grades K-5.
- TDOE should consider clarifying for districts and charter schools with waivers that the specific textbooks in use should be reported on their FLSPs.^A
- TDOE should consider maintaining a list of waivers allowing charter schools to use textbooks not on the adoption list.

A list of publishers and textbooks in use for school districts and charter schools can be found in the full report.

To learn more about this study, see the full report at: <https://www.comptroller.tn.gov/OREA/>.

^A TDOE indicates it plans to address this issue in the next round of FLSPs in 2024.